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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. D. A. Washington, D. C. April 19, 1955 SS149

Crops Damaged by Late March Freeze

Crop damage from freezes in late March over much of the Nation included nearly complete loss of peaches east of the Rockies and south of a line through central Illinois, heavy damage to truck crops, pecans, tung nuts and to most southern deciduous fruits, and to many early plantings of corn and cotton, as well as earliest small grains. The freeze also gave serious setbacks to crop progress and prospects and caused further damage to winter wheat in the dry western part of the Southern Great Plains. These losses, serious as they are to areas concerned, do not yet portend shortage in total seasonal crop production. But progress is generally behind the early April stages of the last three years and later than average in many localities.

Winter Wheat Crop Prospects Decline

The winter wheat crop for harvest in 1955 is indicated at 662 million bushels as of April 1. This would be one-sixth smaller than the 1954 crop and nearly one-fourth less than the 1944-53 average. The decline of 17 million bushels from the forecast on December 1 results from declines in several of the important Great Plains wheat States and in most southern States which more than offset improvement in most North Central States.

Total abandonment and diversion to uses other than grain is indicated at 9.0 million acres, 20.7 percent of the total acreage seeded for all purposes last fall and winter. Last year, 7.4 million acres, or 16.2 percent of the total acreage seeded were lost or diverted.

Orange Crop 5% Above Last Season

Total orange production for the 1954-55 season is estimated at 132.8 million boxes--1 percent less than the March estimate but 5 percent above the 1953-54 crop. About 59 million boxes of oranges remained unharvested on April 1 this year compared with about 50 million remaining a year ago.

Grapefruit Crop Down 12% From Last Season

The grapefruit crop is estimated at 42.6 million boxes--the same as on March 1 but 12 percent less than the 1953-54 crop. About 12 million boxes of grapefruit remained for harvest on April 1 compared with about 15 million remaining a year earlier. Last season, 1.3 million boxes of Florida grapefruit were not utilized.

Freeze Ruins Southern Peach Crop

The 1955 peach crop in the 10 Southern States will be almost a complete failure as a result of freezing

temperatures on March 26 and 27. The freeze damage to the southern crop was the most severe and extensive on record. The effect on future crops of the damage to new growth on peach trees is still uncertain.

In California, low temperatures on April 2 caused considerable damage to peaches in some sections of the Sacramento Valley.

Freeze Damage to Other Fruit and Nut Crops

In Virginia, apple buds were severely damaged by the late March freeze in the southern two-thirds of the State, but the important apple area in the northern Shenandoah Valley suffered little damage. Practically all apple buds were killed in North Carolina and Arkansas and there was severe damage in southern Illinois and southern Missouri.

Low temperatures in the Sacramento Valley of California on April 2 caused considerable damage to apricots, prunes, plums, almonds, and walnuts.

Pecans suffered heavy freeze damage in most areas.

The tung nut crop in the Gulf States will be extremely short as a result of heavy freeze damage to bloom and set.

Spring Vegetable Production Below Last Year

Fresh market spring vegetable and melon supplies will be considerably below last year with 7 percent less tonnage estimated for the crops that constituted over half of the 1954 total. Acreage has been reduced this year and indicated yields are below those of last year.

The prospective 1955 planted acreage of 5 vegetables for commercial processing is about 5 percent less than last year. These vegetables, for which 1955

Production Comparisons

	Jan.-Mar. 1954	Jan.-Mar. 1955
Milk, (bil. lb.).....	28.9	28.4
Eggs, (bil.).....	17.6	17.9
Beef, (dr. wt., mil. lb.).....	11,534	11,521
Pork & lard, (mil. lb.).....	11,583	11,902
Lamb & mutton, (dr. wt., mil. lb.)...	1113	1112
All meats, (dr. wt., mil. lb.).....	13,353	13,658

¹January-February under Federal inspection.

Nonfarm Indexes of Interest to Agriculture

Index Numbers	Base Period	Feb. 1954	Jan. 1955	Feb. 1955
Wholesale prices of food.....	1947-49=100	103	102	102
Retail prices of food.....	1947-49=100	113	111	111
Weekly factory earnings.....	1947-49=100	140	142	145

intended acreage reports are now available, are snap beans, cabbage for kraut (contract acreage only), sweet corn, green peas, and winter and early spring spinach. These crops usually account for around 58 percent of the planted acreage of 11 vegetables for processing.

Pasture Feed Condition Only 75% of Normal

The spring grazing season got off to a slow start again this year. Pasture feed condition for the country as a whole averaged 75 percent of normal, the lowest for the date in 15 years except for last year's 73 percent. Continued drought in the central and lower Great Plains, cold weather and drying winds over much of the West, and freeze damage to green feed in the South all contributed to the low condition on April 1. Western pasture and range conditions are at a 20-year low.

March Egg Production Below Year Ago

Farm flocks laid 6,584 million eggs in March--1 percent less than in March 1954, but 3 percent above the 1944-53 average. Egg production in the first quarter of 1955 was 2 percent above last year and 10 percent above the average.

March Milk Output 2% Below Year Ago

Milk production during March totaled 10,447 million pounds--2 percent below the record output last March, but otherwise the highest March production in 31 years of record. January-March production totaled 28.4 billion pounds, one-half billion pounds or 2 percent below the record January-March 1954 output.

DAIRY AND POULTRY PRODUCTS--FEB. 1955

Item	February 1955	Feb. 1955 from Feb. 1954	Jan.-Feb. 1955 from Jan.-Feb. 1954
	Millions	Percent	Percent
Chicks hatched ¹	162	-15	-17
Chicks placed ²	62	+3	-5
Poults hatched:			
Heavy breeds.....	2.7	-21	-16
Light breeds.....	1.1	-35	-31
	Thousands		
Chickens tested:			
Broilers.....	³ 715	⁴ +7	⁴ +8
All others.....	³ 65	⁴ -12	⁴ -2
Turkeys tested:			
Heavy breeds.....	³ 46.6	⁴ +31	⁴ +5
Light breeds.....	³ 36.7	⁴ -17	⁴ -22
	1,000 Pounds		
Poultry canned.....	17,151	+5	+14
Production:			
Liquid egg.....	39,454	-17	-10
Dried egg (egg solids) ..	1,902	+0.4	+6
Frozen egg.....	27,492	+24	-18
Evaporated whole milk ..	174,800	+11	+6
Dry nonfat milk solids (for human food).....	90,400	-16	-13
Butter, creamery	101,750	-13	-11
Cheese, American.....	63,450	-15	-14
	1,000 Gallons		
Ice cream.....	37,245	-3	+2

¹By commercial hatcheries.

³March.

²13 principal producing areas:

⁴July-March.

March Farm Employment Down 5% From March 1954

About 6,918,000 persons were at work on farms in late March, up 13 percent from a month earlier. There were 12 percent more family workers and 22 percent more hired workers. Compared with a year earlier, there were 5 percent fewer family workers and 5 percent fewer hired workers. These decreases are probably partially accounted for by differences in weather, but some of the decline is a continuation of the long-time downtrend in farm employment.

Farm Wage Rates Up 2% From Year Ago

Wage rates for hired farm workers about April 1 averaged 2 percent higher than a year earlier for the country as a whole. The seasonally adjusted index

Parity Prices for Farm Products and Average Prices Received by Farmers

Commodity and unit	Average price		Parity price
	Feb. 15, 1955	Mar. 15, 1955	Mar. 15, 1955
Wheat, bu.	dol. 2.13	2.12	2.52
Corn, bu.	dol. 1.40	1.36	1.83
Peanuts, lb.	ct. 12.5	12.5	13.7
Cotton, Amer. upland, lb.	ct. 31.69	31.87	35.34
Potatoes, bu.	dol. 1.17	1.18	1.47
Hogs, 100 lb.	dol. 16.40	15.40	21.40
Beef cattle, 100 lb.	dol. 16.50	16.70	21.40
Calves, 100 lb.	dol. 18.00	17.40	23.50
Lambs, 100 lb.	dol. 19.30	19.80	23.50
Butterfat, lb.	ct. 57.5	57.5	74.1
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb.	dol. 4.09	13.94	4.71
Chickens, live, lb.	ct. 23.7	27.3	29.3
Eggs, doz.	ct. 39.5	39.7	46.6

¹Preliminary.

Prices Received and Prices Paid by Farmers Index Numbers, 1910-14=100

Item	Mar. 15, 1954	Feb. 15, 1955	Mar. 15, 1955
Prices received by farmers	256	245	244
Crops	239	245	245
Food grains.....	238	240	239
Feed grains and hay	208	203	198
Tobacco	443	436	437
Cotton	263	268	269
Fruit	212	210	205
Coml. veg. for fresh mkt.	246	258	274
Oil-bearing crops.....	275	270	264
Livestock and products.....	271	244	243
Meat animals.....	316	264	260
Dairy products.....	257	253	249
Poultry and eggs	188	190	199
Prices paid by farmers:			
All commodities	264	264	265
Commodities used in living	272	271	272
Commodities used in production	255	256	256
All commodities, interest, taxes, and wage rates	283	283	284
Wage rates ¹	² 507	521	² 516
Parity ratio (prices received to prices paid by farmers)	90	87	86

¹Seasonally adjusted.

²April 1.

(1910-14 = 100) was 516 compared with 507 last April. Compared with the previous quarter, farm wage rates averaged about 1 percent lower.

April 1 Stocks of Grains on Farms

Supplies of feed grains on farms April 1 were 2 percent larger than a year earlier, an eighth above the 1944-53 average, but nearly a sixth less than the peak on April 1, 1949. Although the number of live-stock to be fed exceeds that of a year ago, the farm supply of feed grains per animal unit is still ample.

Corn stocks - 1,410 million bushels - nearly equals the large April 1 stocks in 1953 and 1954.

Oats - 553 million bushels - nearly 1/4 larger than in each of the last 2 years and 1/8 above average for April 1.

Barley - 117.5 million bushels - a half larger than average and largest April 1 farm stocks since 1953.

Wheat - 208 million bushels - nearly 30% less than a year earlier but only 4% below average.

Rye - 7.7 million bushels - 40% larger than a year ago and 85% above average.

Flaxseed - 14.1 million bushels - largest in 8 years of record.

Soybeans - 115 million bushels - over 3 times as large as a year ago and over 2-2/3 times average.

TURKEYS--1954

Item	1954	1954 compared with 1953
Number produced.....	63 million	+11%
Heavy breeds raised.....	45 million	+9%
Light breeds raised.....	18 million	+17%
Number sold.....	63 million	+11%
Average price received per pound.....	28.8 cents	-14%
Cash receipts from sales.....	\$310 million	-3%
Average liveweight of market turkeys.....	17.2 lbs.	+1%
Death loss of poults.....	10%	¹ 9.4%
Breeder hen losses.....	5.9%	¹ 6.1%

¹ Loss in 1953.

CHICKENS AND EGGS--1954

Item	1954	1954 compared with 1953
<u>Farm chickens</u>		
Total liveweight sold.....	1,661 mil. lbs.	-1%
Average liveweight.....	4.6 pounds	-2%
Average price per pound.....	17.0 cents	-24%
Cash receipts.....	\$282 mil.	-24%
Home consumption.....	\$ 98 mil.	-18%
Gross income.....	\$380 mil.	-23%
<u>Eggs</u>		
Production.....	65.4 mil.	+5%
Price per dozen.....	36.8 cents	-23%
Cash receipts.....	\$1,793 mil.	-19%
Home consumption.....	\$207 mil.	-18%
Gross income.....	\$2,001 mil.	-19%
<u>Commercial broilers</u>		
Production.....	3,267 mil. lbs.	+11%
Average price per pound.....	23.1 cents	-15%
Gross income.....	\$753 mil.	-5%

CURRENTS ESTIMATES

Cash Receipts From Farm Marketing, by States, February, 1955^{1 2}

State	Livestock and products	Crops •	Total
	<i>1,000 dollars</i>	<i>1,000 dollars</i>	<i>1,000 dollars</i>
Maine.....	8,279	9,258	17,537
New Hampshire.....	4,367	751	5,118
Vermont.....	8,070	855	8,925
Massachusetts.....	9,836	3,387	13,223
Rhode Island.....	1,391	436	1,827
Connecticut.....	8,975	4,774	13,749
New York.....	40,749	12,934	53,683
New Jersey.....	17,370	3,888	21,258
Pennsylvania.....	42,729	15,450	58,179
North Atlantic.....	141,766	51,733	193,499
Ohio.....	52,024	24,285	76,309
Indiana.....	55,271	28,075	83,346
Illinois.....	82,834	45,046	127,880
Michigan.....	29,050	15,428	44,478
Wisconsin.....	67,035	8,854	75,889
East North Central.....	286,214	121,688	407,902
Minnesota.....	65,293	50,513	115,806
Iowa.....	135,322	55,125	190,447
Missouri.....	48,144	8,345	56,489
North Dakota.....	7,570	23,096	30,666
South Dakota.....	22,472	16,168	38,640
Nebraska.....	67,443	29,144	96,587
Kansas.....	34,852	43,672	78,524
West North Central.....	381,096	226,063	607,159
Delaware.....	4,858	710	5,568
Maryland.....	10,808	2,071	12,879
Virginia.....	17,080	6,306	23,386
West Virginia.....	5,337	1,653	6,990
North Carolina.....	15,639	6,388	22,027
South Carolina.....	6,424	3,063	9,487
Georgia.....	18,780	6,094	24,874
Florida.....	8,736	53,350	62,086
South Atlantic.....	87,662	79,635	167,297
Kentucky.....	15,000	6,546	21,546
Tennessee.....	14,125	7,916	22,041
Alabama.....	12,484	3,449	15,933
Mississippi.....	9,388	14,886	24,274
Arkansas.....	13,868	10,969	24,837
Louisiana.....	8,044	5,028	13,072
Oklahoma.....	17,319	6,733	24,052
Texas.....	49,555	39,587	89,142
South Central.....	139,783	95,114	234,897
Montana.....	6,479	15,458	21,937
Idaho.....	9,708	14,715	24,423
Wyoming.....	2,885	1,243	4,128
Colorado.....	16,463	7,393	23,856
New Mexico.....	4,290	5,238	9,528
Arizona.....	7,723	11,548	19,271
Utah.....	8,101	1,840	9,941
Nevada.....	1,524	630	2,154
Washington.....	13,099	27,460	40,559
Oregon.....	10,165	10,823	20,988
California.....	62,153	67,109	129,262
Western.....	142,590	163,457	306,047
United States.....	1,179,111	737,690	1,916,801

¹ All figures represent sales of farm products, plus Commodity Credit loans reported during the month minus Commodity Credit loans repaid during the month.

² For comparisons of cash receipts with earlier months and years, see issues of the Farm Income Situation.

Cash Receipts From Farming, United States ¹

Source	Feb. 1955	Mar. 1955 ²
	<i>Mil. dol.</i>	<i>Mil. dol.</i>
Farm marketings and CCC loans ³	1,917	1,900
Livestock and products	1,179	1,300
Meat animals	618	
Dairy products	299	
Poultry and eggs.....	243	
Other.....	19	
Crops	738	600
Food grains	127	
Feed crops	213	
Cotton (lint and seed).....	70	
Oil-bearing crops	79	
Tobacco	19	
Vegetables.....	102	
Fruits and tree nuts	64	
Other.....	64	
Government payments.....	31	
Total cash receipts	1,948	

¹For comparison of cash receipts with earlier months and years, see issues of the Farm Income Situation.

²Preliminary.

³Receipts from loans represent value of loans minus value of redemptions during the month.

Farm-Retail Price Spreads

Marketing Margin and Farmer's Share of the Consumer's
Dollar for Market Basket of Farm-food Products

Year and month	Retail cost ¹	Farm value ²	Marketing margin	Farmer's share
1954 average.....	\$ 985	\$ 427	\$ 558	43%
1954-Feb.	998	445	553	45
1955-Jan.	962	411	551	43
Feb.	970	410	560	42

¹Retail cost of average quantities of farm foods purchased per urban wage-earner and clerical-worker family in 1952, calculated from retail prices collected by Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²Payment to farmers for equivalent quantities of farm produce minus imputed value of byproducts obtained in processing.

For comparisons with earlier months and years see The Marketing and Transportation Situation.

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